

James M^r Lagan

—
The obligation of Christians to
evangelize the heathen ...

Pam
Sermons

Mr Robert Watt Esq

THE
OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIANS
TO EVANGELIZE THE HEATHEN,

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

Perthshire Missionary Society,

ON SUNDAY THE 14th of JULY, 1816;

BY THE

REV. JAMES M'LAGAN,

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF AUCHTERGAVEN.

Perth :

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY,
BY R. MORISON.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Hall Collection
3041 Broadway, New York City

PERTH, 16th July, 1816.

At a General Meeting of the *Perthshire Missionary Society*,

ALEXANDER MURRAY, Esq. of Ayton, in the Chair,

The thanks of the Society were given, from the chair, to the Rev. James M'Lagan, for his excellent Sermon preached before them, on the evening of last Sabbath, and he was requested to favour them with his manuscript, that it may be printed for the benefit of the Society.

REV. JOHN WILLISON, }
REV. JOHN FINDLAY, } *Secretaries.*

OBLIGATION, &c.

A SERMON.

LUKE x, 29.—AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

THESE words, my Brethren, contain an enquiry which it is necessary for every man seriously to make, who would wisely and conscientiously fulfil one important half of the Divine law. The question, we are informed, was put, as it stands in the text, by a Jewish lawyer, to the wisest of teachers, Christ Jesus. That the motive of it was not a simple desire to learn, appears by the intimation in the context, that the "Lawyer stood up, tempting him." And when we consider the general disposition of the Scribes and Pharisees, but particularly, when we attend to the circumstances of the conversation, recorded in this passage, it seems no unreasonable supposition, that the whole was prompted, not so much by an idle curiosity, as by a desire of entangling Jesus in his talk; and thus, at the very least, of diminishing his reputation and success among the people. With this design the Scribe first proposes the question—"What must I do to be saved?" The reply, proper for such a querist, is ready—"What is written in the law? How readest thou?" Jesus had openly taught, that "who-soever believed in him should have everlasting life, and that he who believed not should not see life, but the

wrath of God abode on him." The Scribe, therefore, probably thought himself nearer his purpose, when, in opposition, as he conceived, to this doctrine, he could quote the two great commandments of the law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and thy neighbour as thy self." But Jesus skillfully with-holds the advantage which he expected, by urging him—not to believe—but sincerely to practise the commands which he could so readily cite; well knowing, that a serious attempt to fulfil them, was the likeliest means of discovering to him his own insufficiency, and thus leading him to seek salvation by faith in the son of God. Yet he had another object in view, which was, to administer reproof. While this lawyer had the commandment in his mouth, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," his heart was secretly intent upon impairing the reputation of Jesus, if not upon injuring his person. The pointed reply, therefore, "*This do,*" had the effect of a sharp rebuke. He immediately felt the necessity of standing on the defensive; and, "willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus—But who is my neighbour?" "Granting that I ought to love my countrymen, who observe the word of God, and the institutions of their ancestors; yet am I to love also, a Galilean, and a Nazarene, who puts false glosses upon the law of Moses—rejects the venerable traditions of the elders—brands with hypoerisy the most pious and learned characters of the age, and sets himself and his doctrine above all that has hitherto been revered as coming from God?"

The definition which, in reply to this question, our Lord gives of neighbourhood, must be viewed by us in two lights. It bears the stamp of divine truth—it has the binding force of divine authority. We are neither at liberty

to question its accuracy, nor to reject its practical consequences. It is Christ that speaks. We must both believe what he teaches, and obey what he enjoins. Now he conveys his instructions to the Lawyer, and to us, in the following parable: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half-dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast; and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?' And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

It were foreign to our purpose, to make many observations upon the inimitable art displayed in the structure of this apologue—upon the skill with which the Sovereign Physician extracts the arrows of prejudice from the breast of this opponent. To engage all his patriotic and religious sympathies, and make his very partialities his teachers, the sufferer in the parable is a Jew. The two persons who first discover his painful condition, are of the same nation, and of a common faith: nay they are of the privileged

order of that nation—the teachers and ministers of that religion, who ought, on every account, to compassionate his distress. Yet they are represented as passing by on the other side—to excite the lawyer's indignation, and to suggest, that where the bonds of neighbourhood subsisted, in all possible strength, the *charities* of neighbourhood might be totally deficient. But the next who arrives is a Samaritan; one of a people who were chiefly descended from the worst enemies of Jewish greatness—the Assyrians;—and yet called themselves the children of Jacob: A people who had, through many generations, improved upon the malice of their ancestors; and yet insisted upon being acknowledged as better than brethren: A people who denied the sanctity of the temple at Jerusalem, and arrogated to themselves the only true worship of the God of Israel; and yet, when political expediency required, set up an idol upon his altar. According, therefore, to the Pharisaical doctrine, no bond of union could subsist betwixt this Jew and this Samaritan. They were not to love as friends, but to hate as enemies. Yet the Samaritan rescues the Jew, with striking circumstances of courage and generosity—to conciliate the Lawyer's esteem, and to convince him, in spite of himself, that where all that he acknowledged to be the rights of brotherhood, not only did not exist, but were completely and violently reversed, there the social charities might glow,—and ought to glow,—in all their warmth, to bring relief, through labour, expense, and peril, to an utter stranger, a national enemy, and a religious adversary. Such is the argumentative force of these statements, that the Scribe is ashamed to embrace the absurdity of giving judgment, though in favour of his own preconceptions, against the conclusion to which they lead. For when required to decide which of these three was neigh-

bour to him that fell among the thieves, he said, "He that had mercy on him." Now this is obviously the truth which Jesus meant to teach: and to what does it amount? Undeniably to this, that the ties by which man is bound to man, do not consist alone in community of national origin, in union of political interests, or in concurrence of religious tenets, far less in the more trifling connexions of place, language, and complexion; but retain their force where the opposites of all these seem to establish, between the parties, an irreconcilable animosity. It amounts to this, that every *man*, is pronounced by the Word of God, a *brother*. More particularly it implies, that *whensoever a human being is in distress, and we have power to relieve him*, (these circumstances formed the whole relation betwixt the Jew and the Samaritan,) then the second great commandment of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," fixes upon us its powerful bond, and interposes its awful sanction. "Jesus said unto the Lawyer, Go, and do thou likewise."

If this be the real spirit of the passage before us, then how great is the expansion of heart which Christian Charity is commanded to attain! While she is to devote the larger part of it to God, the remainder must afford room enough to receive the human race. All kindreds, and nations, and languages must have admission, and dwell in it without being straitened. In vain would a near-sighted and selfish prudence attempt to limit her bounty, by suggesting, that one of its objects dwells in an opposite hemisphere,—that another is an enemy of her country, and a third a persecutor of her faith. None of these things can exclude them from her province; for after every objection is made, still they are men.—Yet her views, however comprehensive, have no affinity to the sallies of an extravagant imagination, that would wander round the globe, exercis-

ing a blind or a wrong-headed beneficence. No; she is a sober calculator, the energy of whose affections does not at all disturb the patient and severe investigations of her judgment. It is very true, those who have not stretched their understandings to the dimensions of her scheme, or do not perceive the infallible certainty of the data upon which her calculations proceed, must of necessity account those undertakings enthusiastic and absurd, of which they see the difficulties, but cannot see the reasons and objects. But it is nevertheless equally true, that under the steady light of a mind as sober as it is comprehensive, she proceeds in performing the task committed to her care, which, we have seen, is nothing less than to relieve the wants of the human race.

Because it is essential to the success of every undertaking, that the entire case be taken into account, she calmly sits down to take an exact survey, both of her own resources, and of the whole amount of the evils which they are destined to alleviate. In viewing the latter, she does not confine her attention to a small portion of mankind;—that would lead to a mighty error in the issue of the inquiry: but she surveys the world and all that dwell therein. Neither in contemplating the sufferings incident to man in every clime, does she close one eye, and look only at particular kinds of them;—that were another fallacy: but she peruses the whole catalogue of miseries to which he is born, whether they affect his body or his spirit—his present or his future existence. By this process, indeed, such a world of sorrows is brought into view as far exceeds her abilities immediately to relieve. But this only demonstrates the necessity of a selection. And who does not acknowledge, that those evils are by far the most terrible, and have infinitely the strongest claims to her compassion, which ruin the immortal part,

and consign it to incurable woe? This is the conclusion which she at least will be constrained to adopt—she, whose judgment is formed upon the lessons of a master, who, though he could command the stones to become bread, and call treasure from the bottom of the sea, chose rather to subsist with his disciples upon the bounty of a few devout women; but who wrought many miracles,—accomplished many labours,—endured many sufferings,—expired on a cross,—rose again from the dead, and now regulates in heaven the concerns of men, not to terminate the “light afflictions” of this world, “which are but for a moment,” but to bestow upon those who patiently endure them, a “far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.” With such an example proposed for her imitation, pitying, as she does, the unhappy slaves of oppression and barbarism, she still directs the main stream of her beneficence to succour the still more wretched victims of ignorance and sin.

If these abound in every region, yet they do not abound alike. The sufferings of all are not equally severe, nor equally helpless. Wherever the Christian faith is established deliverance is at hand for every man who will accept it; the evil is restrained in its operation upon the whole mass of society, and thousands are continually rescued from it entirely and for ever. Whereas in the vast dominions of Paganism, containing by far the greater portion of our race, it spreads without control a wide-wasting destruction. No man knows that a remedy exists, far less can any tell where it is to be found.

Of these two fields for the exercise of beneficence, were Charity commanded to select one to the exclusion of the other, it might, in the opinion of some, be a doubtful matter which she ought to occupy. But then her concern is with both, and all the human means for bringing Salvation

to both, are actually committed to her management. Shall she then turn away entirely from that region of thick darkness, which, greatly as it does exceed the other in extent, surpasses it still more in wretchedness? Shall she expend the patrimony of the human race upon a small, and that, the least necessitous part, while the rest are perishing miserably by her unequal distribution? Such was not her primitive course. She taught her earliest Apostles first to evangelise Judea; but afterwards, to spread themselves among the Gentiles. She taught the great Instructor of the Heathen to take upon him the daily care of all the Churches already established; but, to *delight* in advancing beyond the limits of all former labours, and planting the tree of life in the recesses of the wilderness. And such, if we would listen to them, will be her injunctions to us at this day:—provided only we possess adequate means to carry on the glorious work which has now, for so many ages, been in a great measure interrupted.

Now, in carefully examining the sufficiency of our resources, by the light which the word of God supplies, Charity finds no cause to despair, but much to rejoice and triumph. For that word, by disclosing the revolutions of a future age, and the method of their production, supplies her with a convincing argument that her strength is proportioned to her task. It assures her, that against a certain period, Christ “shall receive the Heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.” It teaches that their conversion is not to be accomplished by miraculous means, not by a light shining suddenly in the firmament, nor by an audible voice from Heaven, but by the aid of human instruction. Saul of Tarsus, the only person recorded to have been reclaimed in that extraordinary manner, directs us to inquire,

“How can the Gentiles call upon the name of him in whom they have not believed? and how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?” and whence, we may add, shall men be sent to preach Christ, except from the bosom of the Christian Church? If the means of evangelizing the Heathen exist not there, they exist not at all: the word of God is made of none effect, and the Saviour of men is abridged of his reward. But these things cannot be. We are plentifully furnished with all the means of gaining a spiritual conquest over the world. Recently, by the blessing of God, we have been led to perceive our strength. It has been put to the trial and found effective. Its sufficiency is no longer a matter of reasoning but of experience. What was formerly testified by faith, is now amply confirmed by sight; and so many clear discoveries are made, both of the extreme religious and moral degradation into which the Gentiles are fallen, and of the efficacy of the Gospel to reclaim them, as illustrate, in a new and striking manner, the force of those obligations by which Christians are bound to persevere in the attempt.

To bring home, if possible, a sense of these obligations to our hearts, let us attend to a few particulars that may suggest,

I. The spiritual wants of the Heathen:

II. The means which the Christian world possesses of relieving them.

If we wish to gain just notions on the former of these subjects, namely, the spiritual wants of the Heathen, it is necessary to fix upon some standard by which they may be ascertained—some rule by which they may be tried. The rule which seems least exceptionable is, That degree of spi-

ritual knowledge and comfort which God actually imparts to his people, and which he intends the human race at large to enjoy. In as far as men come short of this standard, they ought to be regarded as suffering loss; as abridged of their paternal inheritance: and therefore in need of assistance and supply. In this land of light and love, though none can be supposed to have taken full possession of the blessings provided in the Gospel, yet how many inestimable privileges, Brethren, do you actually enjoy and use, of which the Heathen have no conception. All these, then, which to you are *gain*, are *loss* if viewed in relation to them: for the self-same charter which confers your right to them, establishes theirs also. Let the follower of Jesus Christ, then, seriously consider what benefits he derives from the Gospel of Peace;—what glorious discoveries of the perfections and counsels of the Almighty—what sacred delight in his worship—what wisdom in the conduct of life—what firmness in temptation—what comfort in affliction—what hopes in death:—and if he can set a price upon these invaluable mercies, that price will measure and ascertain, from what portion of their Father's bounty the Heathen are cut off, by the inconsiderateness and sloth, not to say the prejudice and insensibility, of their brethren.

Can it be lost labour in an advocate of this cause, to remind a Christian audience, with what unspeakable advantages their souls are favoured? By what winds and tides—what charts and beacons, they are enabled to pursue a prosperous course to the felicities of paradise? What, let me ask, is the source both of your zeal and your prudence, in the service of your Creator? Whence flow at once the circumspection which regulates, and the spirit which animates your course, round the whole circle of duty? Is it not from the views you obtained, at the foot of the Cross,

both of "the terrors and mercies of the Lord?" There you beheld Eternal Justice, armed with almighty power, and guided by a perfect discernment of all open, all secret things, weighing in an even balance the deeds of sinful men, and with a serene but inflexible displeasure, far more terrible than the storms of passion, executing a righteous vengeance upon the obstinate workers of iniquity. This has overawed your spirits; and restrained you, not only from committing sin, but even from prosecuting the work of so awful a being with ignorant precipitation. On the other hand, you beheld the Sovereign Mercy, supported by the same attributes of wisdom and power, contemplating with unchangeable compassion the degradation and misery of man;—descending from her throne of glory—veiling herself in the infirmity of our flesh—asserting to herself, and herself enduring, the curse of our transgressions—proclaiming in the end our deliverance—and bestowing pardon and reconciliation, sanctification and eternal life, upon every man who will accept the gift. Encouraged by this to seek the face of God your Saviour, you have found his character so perfect, and his reward so rich and so secure, that you delight in consecrating all the faculties of body, soul, and spirit, to his service.—But the poor Heathen is alike unacquainted with your fear and your hope. He has neither the one to deter, nor the other to stimulate; for he is without Christ who is the Author of both.

Whence is it, again, that a Christian is in nothing subjected to corroding cares and anxieties? Whence is it that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind? Is it not because he is enabled "in all things, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," to "cast his care upon God?" and that "through Christ Jesus"? How sure is the success of prayer present

ed by such an intercessor ! “ Him hath the Father sealed.” “ Him the Father heareth always.” How certain is it, that no petition, uttered in faith, shall be neglected by the advocate ! He perceives all our wants, and all our expressions of them, with the knowledge of a God : He compassionates all our infirmities and afflictions, with the sympathy of a man—a man of sorrows. Here are encouragements which will bear the test of the strictest examination, leading you to the throne of grace, in the firm assurance that your complaints will be regarded, and your requests answered with blessings more and better than they ask.—But the Heathen who knows nothing of the one Mediator betwixt God and man, is quite a stranger to this filial confidence. No accredited messenger of heaven, has invited him to the presence of his Creator, or pointed out the way. His guides, if he approach at all, can only be uncertain conjectures or obscure traditions, which are so crossed with doubts, and involved in endless perplexities, as necessarily to leave him, after all, a prey to the reproaches of his own heart, and to the numberless agitations and disquietudes of fortune.

Once more : whence is it that the Christian derives his sober estimate both of the enjoyments and sufferings of this world ?—that estimate which disposes him, when required, to prefer the most arduous labours of duty, to the advancement of his worldly interests, or the gratification of his natural passions. What, for instance, has induced him willingly to impose so severe a curb upon his propensities, as that which constrains him to “ love his enemies, to bless them that curse him, and do good to them that despitefully use him, and persecute him ?” Or how is he able so far to emancipate himself from the dominion of selfish affections, as to employ his talents and fortune in the exer-

cise of that diffusive charity, which, we have seen, his Master prescribes? The answer is easy. He knows himself an immortal creature, and destined to immortal rewards. He sees the palm and crown prepared, which make it the sober dictate of wisdom, not only to make one and another surrender of interest or pleasure to duty; but in the face of all possible difficulties, to be “steadfast, immoveable, *always* abounding in the work of the Lord;” and even to lay down life itself, when the advancement of that work requires the sacrifice.—But to the habit of such ennobling exertions as these, the Heathen can never attain; because—he has no clear or steady insight into futurity. On this momentous subject, he is again left to his conjectures and doubts; for, let it still be observed, he is without Christ, who alone “has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.” Be his virtues, therefore, as specious in themselves, and as pompously eulogised as they will, rarely indeed will they rise above the spirit of that degrading maxim, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Yet this being, with the many millions, who, for want of Christian instruction, live, like him, without God and without hope in the world, is *capable* of appreciating our highest privileges; capable of sharing them: and, I repeat it, entitled by a patent from Heaven, to have them presented to his acceptance. When the Saviour says to his twelve apostles, “Go and teach ALL NATIONS,” he not only recognizes the title of all, but couples it with a commandment to the depositaries of his doctrine, which has never been repealed, and from which no jot or no tittle can ever pass, until its object be fully accomplished. Were we, therefore, entirely unacquainted with the actual state of unenlightened and idolatrous nations; did we know but this, and nothing more, that they fall so vastly short of that standard

of religious improvement and comfort which God intends them, by means of Christian teaching, ultimately to attain : surely we ought to feel ourselves bound by the general law of love, much more by the specific precept, to communicate to the other Gentiles, what has been so amply imparted to ourselves, (a Gentile race) through the disinterested labours of the primitive Evangelists.

But to stop short here, and pay no regard to the actual state of opinion and practice among the Heathen, were to overlook a mighty host of evils, by which the sufferers make a powerful appeal to our hearts. It is a truth confirmed by the uniform experience of past ages, that wheresoever the doctrine of redemption by the seed of the woman has not been taught, there the light of nature has been abused. Extravagant and monstrous opinions have been universally embraced, respecting the nature of God and the destiny of man. These, by a natural process, have led to enormous practical corruptions ; which, in their turn, have brought wretchedness unto the bosom of society, and consigned futurity to despair. The present age is far indeed from contradicting the testimony of past times in this matter. At this day, we see that nations unacquainted with Christianity, “ because they liked not to retain God in their knowledge, but have changed his truth into a lie, are given over to an undiscerning mind, to do those things which are not convenient : knowing, at the same time, the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death.”

In the progress of their error and depravity, no doubt there are degrees. Mahomet has drawn from the Christian Scriptures, the main points of what he teaches, respecting the unity, perfections, and providence of God. So far it is well. But because he has misrepresented the office of

Christ, and substituted, instead of the Heavenly Jerusalem, a paradise of sensual delights—what is the well known consequence? His worship is a hollow system of ablutions, pilgrimages, and penances. His followers, whatever maxims of justice may be scattered over his law, are everywhere the agents, or else the victims, of tyranny and iniquity. And instead of imposing a wholesome restraint upon the passions, his principles are usually found to combine, in the same individuals, a gross indulgence of the luxurious appetites, with an untameable ferocity of temper.

Still worse is the condition of those Heathens, (for such are to be found in modern, as well as in ancient times,) who, following the light of nature so far as to admit the unity of the Supreme God—his infinite wisdom—his eternal power and Godhead—turn short where it most concerns them to advance; and, contrary to the plainest dictates of reason, deny his providence. These represent him as dwelling retired, in a state of inactive enjoyment, far removed from the care of creating or governing this lower world; and if they prefer not the dominion of blind accident or blind fatality, commit the concerns of men into the hands of certain inferior divinities who rule them at pleasure. Lower still in the scale, are such as deny the pure spirituality of God; confound the Creator with his works; and regard the whole material frame—the heavens and the earth, with all the hosts of them—as parts of one and the same deity. These account it reasonable to worship every object that is capable of becoming the instrument either of good or evil; such as the sun and moon—the souls of men, living or dead:—“birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”

Other systems of the learned (for these are the opinions of their wise men) might be mentioned, were it necessary;

but it is enough at present to observe, that they all terminate in creature-worship and idolatry. To these, in their grossest form, the multitude are every where addicted. They rarely attain even to those lesser absurdities which the philosophers misname refinements: but the philosophers on the other side, join with them in adoring a motley crowd of minor deities. All these, it is thought, are endowed with formidable power and sagacity. The best of them, however, feel the extremes of human passions—of love and hatred, hope and fear;—of pride, ambition, and revenge. In many the impure and malignant dispositions greatly preponderate; and while none of them is absolutely benevolent, some are a mere compound of strength, subtilty, and malice. The power of all to do good is limited, but all are capable of inflicting evils that are intolerable to feeble mortals. And as they are susceptible of offence, from accidental or mysterious causes, so they may be pacified by absurd and criminal acts of atonement.

Such is the herd of Divinities which more than half the human race continue to serve. How remote from the perfections of the “King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God; who made all things by the word of his power; who does in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth whatever is good in his sight;” without whom an angel cannot ascend, without whom “not a sparrow falleth to the ground.” The pure and spiritual service, suited to this all-perfect being, exalts, invigorates, and consoles, the mind of him that renders it. But the homage paid to Baalim can only torment and brutalize the worshipper. Beings limited and necessitous, like these false deities, possess not sufficient dignity and worth, to meet the wishes of a soul formed for the contemplation of absolute perfection. It is not therefore in the exercise of

adoration, confidence and love, that men expect to find gratification, when they surround their altars. No—It is in the unrestrained indulgence of appetite; which they believe as acceptable to their gods, as it is agreeable to their own sinful inclinations. This is not a time for conducting you in the steps of those travellers who have ventured to look upon the detestable rites of paganism. It is enough to have remarked in general, that one great characteristic of these rites is *Impunity*; of which to name the smallest part within these walls, were to profane the temple of him who alone is pure.—But if idols and demons are incapable of exciting religious confidence or love, they possess an unlimited power over the fears of a darkened and superstitious mind. Armed with unknown and undefined powers; agitated by passions which are gloomy and furious, in proportion to the greatness of the beings in which they reside; these frightful phantoms terrify the imagination, and drive their deluded votaries to deeds of the most savage expiation. Hence the other great characteristic of their worship is *Cruelty*. Hence men are content to anticipate their wrath, or glut their revenge, by executing horrible punishments upon themselves. The Indian of North America, to propitiate his God, assembles his tribe around the consecrated fire; forces both his mind and body into convulsive agitations; and, howling aloud, perseveres, until he falls down exhausted and speechless with his frantic exertions. For a similar purpose, the Devotee of Hindostan, is often known to suspend himself from a gibbet, in cruel and protracted torments. The code of morals which he believes to be divinely inspired, prescribes it as one method of obtaining salvation, to parch up and emaciate the body, by exposing it naked to the united heat of a vertical sun, and of a circle of artificial fires. Even in that country, of comparative

civilization, thousands of men and women annually leave their homes, and undertake a journey of many weeks to the temple of Juggernaut, through deserts strewed with the bones of former pilgrims who have perished there with thirst and fatigue. Nor does the phrenzy terminate here. The world is not yet freed of such as inquire, "shall I give my first-born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Many are the worshippers who do not yet believe that the highest point of devotion has been touched, or the greatest act of piety performed, until their God has devoured the flesh and drank the blood of man. Does not the Indian Moloch continue, in his annual progress, to crush his human victims to death beneath the wheels of his chariot? and among the nations of the south sea, do not our Navigators find the rude sanctuaries of religion, covered with the carcases of men slain in sacrifice? From devotions such as these, how can any good thing proceed? You, Christians, come in peace to the house of the Invisible God. There he blesses you with his presence. He satisfies your souls as with marrow and with fatness. You retire instructed and thankful; and engage in the business of life with a pious courage and an improved understanding:—While the unhappy Idolater never brings into the presence of his graven image, any sentiments but those of unhallowed desire or shuddering apprehension; and reaps no fruit from his lengthened services, but a soul imbruted and debased, and a body disordered with riot, or else broken and enfeebled with lingering tortures.

If this be the kind of intercourse which the Heathen hold with those beings whom they esteem the holiest and the best, what may we expect their conduct to be in their relations to one another? Are we to look among them for a general exercise of the social virtues? Is theirs a soil

where truth, justice, and mercy, may be supposed to flourish? Let them not be subjected to indiscriminate censure. Some eminent instances of these may, doubtless, be found amongst them. But were it only out of concern for truth, it must be asserted, that such instances are very rare, and derive much of their lustre, when they occur, from the contrast in which they stand with surrounding depravity. The time is past when men expected to find superior integrity of character among the rudest order of Barbarians: but even where civilization has made considerable progress, the love of truth has not kept pace with it. On the contrary, it has only served to polish deceit, to give fraud the accomplishments of dissimulation and address, and teach men, by the force of habit, to despise the shame, if they can escape the danger, of detection. Upon such persons, the remonstrances and reproaches of a stranger, who feels indignation at their unworthy artifices, are quite thrown away. They answer all by coolly observing, That such is the practice of the country. And if there are laws to restrain their iniquities, they are rendered ineffectual by the corruption of the judge: who, by setting his decisions to sale, renders the place of justice an advantage-ground, on which the wealthy may, with greater security, oppress and rob the poor. Well do the words of Scripture apply to their condition; "Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come before them."

Strikingly as these vices appear, over the whole face of the Pagan world, its deficiencies are still more remarkable, in the exercises of humanity and mercy. It were saying little to aver, that Heathens are generally ignorant of the duty of forgiving injuries, of "not returning evil for evil,"

of "overcoming evil with good." On these points, their morals are not only defective, but often inverted; and he who excels in doing good to his friends, is reckoned an imperfect character, unless he is also conspicuous for a vindictive dexterity and perseverance in annoying his enemies. But an indisposition even to the direct and simple expressions of kindness and compassion, is a prominent feature of their characters. There is in them a hardened ingratitude, and a callous insensibility to the sufferings of others. Let one illustration of this remark suffice. When the Moravian Missionaries, who first visited Greenland, had, by the extraordinary severity of the seasons, and by their want of skill in fishing and hunting, been reduced to the utmost extremity, they applied for relief to the natives, whom they had always treated with the greatest kindness, and had often supplied freely with various necessaries and conveniences of life. But their intreaties were vain. With all the marks of pinching famine in their countenances, they repeatedly approached the house of feasting, where the Greenlanders, in the midst of plenty, were indulging to a gluttonous excess: and not only was the least gratuitous aid denied them, but their offers to purchase those offals, which, in the time of their abundance, they could have easily procured, were now rejected by all, and their miseries made the object of savage derision and insult.

Perhaps, however, it may be supposed that the Heathen may excel in the cultivation at least of the domestic affections:—and no doubt many eminent, though unconnected, instances may be found amongst them, of conjugal, or parental, or filial attachment. But is it to be supposed that the household virtues can flourish, where that institution, which is the foundation of home enjoyments, is universally and grossly abused? nay, where acts of barbarous cruelty

towards the nearest kindred, have usurped the place, and bear the name, of sacred duties? In one country, the man of rank, and the priest of religion, attends his widowed relative, perhaps the mother that bare him, to the funeral pile of her husband, and watches, lest by any accident, she should escape with life from the flames. In another, a parent, worn with disease or old age, is exposed by his children, with a morsel of bread and a cruse of water, upon the bank of some lonely river in the wilderness, that he may be relieved from his sufferings, by the first hyena or tyger that comes to slake his thirst in the stream. In another, nay in many countries, helpless childhood is continually falling a prey to this inhuman insensibility. Hundreds of infants—of female infants especially, are annually destroyed by their parents, either as being useless and burdensome, or to deliver them from the future evils of life.—“I remonstrated,” says an American Missionary, “with an Indian woman, who had recently murdered her female child. Would to God, she replied, that my mother had taken away my life as soon as I was born. From how much misery had I thus escaped!”

I know not, my brethren, how you are affected by the report of these things: certain I am, that you could not endure the actual sight of them, without the strongest sensations both of pity and disgust. Were you to traverse only that small portion of the Heathen world which is included in the British dominions, on the continent of Asia: and were you spectators only of what has passed there, within the memory of the present generation:—or were it possible for us to present, in one collected view before you, all the diversified scenes of living and breathing misery, which, in that spot, and within that period alone, has been produced by Pagan piety and Pagan morals, you would turn away

from the spectacle with astonishment and horror. Or were the ear your informant, and could all the sounds of grief and pain, of despair and death, which have been uttered by those who then and there have agonized beneath the charities and tender-mercies of Idolatry,—could these be brought in one dismal groan to your ears, it would shake your hearts with the profoundest emotions of dismay and of compassion. But what is that contracted territory to the other wide and populous regions which are involved in equal, or greater darkness? What is that limited period to the ages of ignorance, that extend backwards till we approach the flood, and must stretch forward, until the blessed light of the Gospel has been diffused over the earth? The imagination is overwhelmed, in attempting to conceive the ravages, which, within such vast boundaries of time and space, superstition and error have committed, upon the happiness of man. And yet, alas! is not this the smallest part? Is there not a still more capacious and enduring scene, to which their mortal influences extend? We attempt not to unveil the secrets of the world of spirits. We pronounce no judgment upon the future destiny of men who die in unavoidable ignorance of the Gospel. But this we cannot doubt—this we cannot forget—that if the severest penalties of futurity belong to those who shall have heard and abused the doctrines of salvation, yet the outcasts of this description will be in proportion far less numerous, than such as, through life, have had no better guides or motives to holiness, than the suggestions of a weak and corrupt nature. What, then, is the sum of the whole matter? Do not the Heathen suffer the most pressing wants? Do they not stand in need—in urgent need, of our compassionate interference? And knowing, as we do, their distresses, if we withhold our aid, what excuse shall we find to satisfy

our own hearts, or at all to justify us in the day of judgment? Unless, indeed, we can truly alledge, that to render effectual assistance to any of them, was entirely out of our power.

II. But in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion upon this second great question, namely, Whether the Christian world is, or is not, in condition to relieve the spiritual wants of the Heathen, it appears by no means necessary to discuss it in its whole extent. For it embraces two inquiries;—the first, Whether the system of Divine truth, contained in the Scriptures, would, if fully communicated, prove a remedy adequate to their case:—the second, Whether, upon supposition of its efficacy, we have it not actually in our power to impart it. Now, upon the former of these points, it may surely be presumed, that all Christians are agreed; since Scripture and experience join to testify, that, “through the knowledge of Christ, the Divine power hath given unto us all things pertaining to life and godliness,” as well as secured our entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.” The only question, therefore, which we are at present concerned to examine, is this, Whether it be possible for Christians to present their faith to bigotted or barbarous Heathens, in such a light, that they shall both understand and embrace it.

If this arduous task were left to human efforts alone, we readily grant it would never be accomplished. But the same divine person who has commanded—“Go and teach all nations,” has added,—“And behold I am with you ALWAYS, to the end of the world.” Upon this assurance all our hopes are ultimately rested, and we confidently ask, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Yet while we make this profession, let no one suspect us of an intention

to draw him beyond the firm ground of the promise, by interpreting it in too favourable a sense. Aware of that danger, we will not assert, that Christ here insures success to every attempt; or even to every well conducted attempt; or indeed to any attempt at all, but with much time and difficulty. It is enough if we are permitted to paraphrase his language thus, "When, at any future period, you my disciples, revering my command, and relying on my power, shall have associated yourselves to evangelise the Heathen—when you shall have made the necessary provision for delivering my message uncorruptly—when you shall have employed the due measure of wisdom, industry, and perseverance in the work:—then shall my strength come in aid of your weakness. Resisted your exertions may be, but they shall not be defeated. Individual efforts may fail, but the general enterprise shall prosper; until the predicted period arrive, when men shall be blessed in me, and all nations shall call me blessed."

If the faithfulness of our Blessed Lord, then, is thus embarked in the cause—and if God assumes to himself, as the Bible declares he does assume, the care of commending his truth to the hearts and consciences of men, what remains to be accomplished by us, my Brethren, in the work of enlightening the Gentiles, but the task of laying the Gospel distinctly before them. The doctrines of salvation, in their Scriptural fulness and simplicity, being once announced to them, all is done that God has left to human efforts. And at the present day, does any one doubt that this much at least can easily be accomplished? Where do we meet with any insurmountable difficulty? Is it impossible to provide a sufficient number of persons qualified to become the Heralds of Salvation? If not, will the public deny them its support? And can we neither

find nor excite such a spirit of Christian liberality as will voluntarily defray the charges of their mission? If this is not to be apprehended, shall we be at a loss for able and upright men, who, acting as stewards of the general bounty, shall prepare and send forth these ambassadors of peace; shall maintain the necessary intercourse with their distant settlements; and, in a word, shall undertake the management of the whole design? These are the grand requisites for conducting a project of this nature to a successful issue. If these are to be found, pecuniary means need create no anxiety. The soldiers whom we would send forth to victory, like the chosen band of Gideon, are few in number, and furnished with inexpensive arms. We require not the resources of empires. Let every Christian, renouncing but some needless superfluity—some trifling indulgence—cast the price habitually into this treasury, and the produce will quickly empower us to store the world with imperishable riches.

Happily the previous, and without experience, the more doubtful questions, are no longer to be decided by a detail of arguments, but by a reference to facts. Let us only look around, and we shall see all the most arduous preparations for this enterprise, to a considerable extent already made.—Do we ask whether the public will take a general concern in it? It is certain that thousands, chiefly in our own country, but also in other parts of Europe, in Asia, and in America, direct their attention to it with the liveliest interest. They regard it no longer as an enthusiastic or impracticable scheme. They have a settled conviction of its obligation; they feel a steady confidence in its success; and while their vigilant kindness overlooks not the miseries that languish at the door, a gift of mercy to unknown and distant sufferers, forms an annual item in their

liberalities. The spirit too, is extending to various places, and to every rank in society. As the sources of information multiply, that prejudice and ignorance which led many to view the subject with indifference or suspicion, are melting away, like vernal snows, from the face of the Christian world: and where these retire, the healing plant of Missionary zeal, which has a secret root in every pious bosom, quickened by the genial influence of knowledge, is gradually putting forth its buds, and flowers, and fruit.

Do we enquire again, where the men are to be found who shall direct and apply this growing bounty? It is well known that many Societies exist which make this their sole object. These will be found upon examination, to have substantial claims to the favour and confidence of the public. All their proceedings are laid open to the inspection of the world. In not a few of them, much solid learning, and a thorough devotedness to the cause, are assisted by an intimate knowledge of human nature, and human affairs. Some deserve a special regard, having been actively engaged in Missionary labours for a long series of years. These have had opportunities of observing, how men in different stages of civilization, and under the deepest shades of ignorance and delusion, are affected by all the various modes of Christian instruction; and have therefore added to their general prudence, that peculiar skill and sagacity which are adapted to their proper work. New associations, moreover, are occasionally rising up, which either contribute to the support of those already formed, or engage in separate undertakings with all the advantages of their experience.

Do we demand still farther, whether these Societies have succeeded in providing suitable teachers? It is certain many such have actually been sent forth, who have

assailed, on every side, the strong-holds of idolatry. Some, after lengthened services in this warfare, have deposited their bones in the scene of action. Some, their immediate successors, have grown old at the post of difficulty and danger. Others in the prime of life have advanced to reinforce these latter combatants; and more, at home, are in training for future conflicts and future triumphs. With respect to the qualifications of these Missionaries, we are nowise concerned to dissemble the fact, that out of a great number, one and another, perhaps, have proved utterly unworthy of the name; or that some possess no more than an ordinary share of the accomplishments necessary for the discharge of such arduous duties. In this they only resemble the Apostles themselves. But like the Apostles also, we find in the list of Missionaries, individuals who will not suffer by a comparison with the foremost men of their age, in all the excellencies of the understanding and the heart. In them we see an exalted spirit of Christian piety, as enlightened as it is fervent; as practical as it is refined. In them we discover, under the veil of an humble and simple deportment, natural talents of the first order, and vast literary attainments, consecrated with unwearied industry and perseverance, to advance the highest interests of mankind, where there exists not the remotest prospect of any earthly reward. In them we behold all the ardour of an active and intrepid zeal, brought under the rigorous control of a prudence the most vigilant, discerning, and cautious: and are constrained to admire and to love that soft lustre of their characters, which flows from blending the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. You have not time to hear of the acknowledgments which their worth has forced from the lips of their adversaries; or of the services which they have been enabled, in a private sta-

tion, and by the weight of their virtues alone, to render to the state. But it would be inexcusable did we not by one short hint, direct your attention to that most gratifying scene, where Missionaries of more than one denotation, while restricting themselves and their children to the simple necessities of life, are creating the means of a noble munificence to the Heathen, by the vigorous efforts of their genius, and the unremitted labour of their hands. From the blessing of God upon the exertions of men so able, so devoted, so heavenly-minded as these, may we not confidently expect the happiest results?

Here, indeed, it would seem that we might bring our observations to a close, and upon the joint evidence of facts and scripture now adduced, might require your assent to the proposition, That Christendom possesses means amply sufficient for the gradual conversion of the world. But lest any scruple should remain unsubdued, let us proceed to something yet more striking, though perhaps not more conclusive. Let us attend to the manner in which the power of Christ accompanying the publication of his truth, has actually turned many of the Gentiles from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

The field in which these happy revolutions have been wrought is already very extended, and presents us with a multitude of decisive experiments. The Heralds of Messiah have visited almost every latitude—have conversed with the men of almost every race, and every complexion—have tried the effect of their instructions upon almost every variety of character that rude hordes or civilized nations can exhibit; and have seen their labours, with scarce an exception, crowned with the most encouraging success. Whether they travelled to regions that lie within the tropics, or beyond the polar circle; whether they unfolded the

mysteries of divine wisdom to the acute Brahmun, or the dull barbarian of Labrador: few, very few are the stations where these generous lovers of human kind have once fixed their residence, at which we cannot now point to a little flock of Christian converts, gathered like wandering sheep from the desert, and safely lodged within the fold of the Good Shepherd.

That the change of profession in the majority of these converts, has been produced chiefly or entirely by the force of truth, with very few inducements from interest or ambition, no one who has attentively read their history will call in question. That it is not a change of name merely, but a thorough renovation both of their religious belief and of their active principles, that has been effected, will be equally manifest from an observation of their conduct. In whatever view we compare their present with their former character, we shall be irresistibly led to this conclusion.— If we regard them in a political light, we shall find them greatly advanced in those habits of subordination and industry, which are the foundations of national prosperity. The same individual, we shall see, who from his childhood felt no restraint, not even that of paternal authority, and who abhorred the very appearance of subjection, has submitted himself to salutary regulations of a civil as well as a religious kind. The wandering savage who knew no home but the forest, who sought no habitation but the wigwam or the cavern, and who possessed no property but such as he could bear about from thicket to thicket, and from island to island, has now attached himself to a spot, built for himself a substantial tenement, and stored his cottage and his field with articles of value. The same hand which formerly refused to wield any weapon but the club or the bow, and disdaining all unbloody occupations, exerted its strength on

ly in war or in the chase, is now reconciled to the employments of man in his state of primeval innocence, or of cultivated improvement, and plies, with assiduity, the implements of husbandry and manufacture. Without intimately feeling the force of that truth which the Missionaries teach, would such a man be persuaded by them to resign so large a part of his unbounded license, and thus to endure the fatigues of regular employment?

If we view these proselytes in reference to such virtues as render a man in private life the object of confidence or affection, we shall discover an improvement no less remarkable. He who, in his ignorance, was familiar with the language of deceit and malignity now speaks the truth in love. He who stole, steals no more, but rather labours with his hands. The sensualist has renounced his riotous living, and learned to use the world as not abusing it. Nay, these new Christians, in a body, have become alive, if they were not formerly so, to the leading proprieties and decencies of life. Whatever in garb, or conversation, or manners, could give reasonable offence to the taste of civilized strangers, has been in a great measure dismissed, and a manifest carefulness excited to provide things becoming in the sight of all men.

In short, our conviction that Christianity in them is not fictitious but genuine will be completed, if approaching yet more closely, we inspect the interior features of their minds, and observe the rapid progress of their intellectual and moral powers towards perfection. Formerly they presented in this view a melancholy spectacle. Exposed in many distant countries to the degrading influence of many opposite causes, the inward frame of all was enfeebled, distorted, mutilated; but as might be expected, in a thousand different ways. The truths, however, in which they are now instructed

have proved a cure alike for every disease. The native of Greenland, whose heart was once as torpid and frozen as the ice that surrounded him, converted at length to the faith of Jesus, is become susceptible of all the liveliest and purest sensibilities of our nature, and sheds profusely, the tear of brotherly-kindness and of devotional joy. The wild African whose rational faculties were become nearly extinct, and who had sunk in the scale of intellectual beings almost to the level of the brutes whose habits he adopted, now expands his soul to the conception of celestial and eternal things—exerts upon other subjects also a sounder understanding—and establishes upon the best foundation his title to the name and dignity of a man. The native American once disguised in human form the rage and cruelty of the Tyger. An untameable fierceness and insatiable thirst of revenge, joined with a cunning the most subtle and insidious, were the attributes in which he delighted. But he too has put off this savage garb and clothed himself in the simplicity and gentleness of the lamb. He is become meek, patient, forgiving—and has exchanged the false grandeur of his pride for the lowly and pious magnanimity of the Gospel. A different change yet tending to the same point is observable in the feeble Hindoo. He has renounced his natural indolence; he has forgotten his habitual fears; and braving the terrors of persecution, labours incessantly to communicate the treasure which he has found to his idolatrous countrymen. Thus we see with admiration, men whose vices and infirmities led them far asunder in the most opposite directions, drawn back again by one powerful cause, towards a common centre of excellence in the enlightened love of God and their brethren. We see men whose wide distinctions of character seemed to mark them out as the descendants of distinct families, restored to

a fraternal resemblance, by being each created anew after the image of one Common Lord. With gratitude and joy we perceive, that he, who in the days of his flesh, went about healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people, still walks the earth in his power; and in the noblest sense commands the blind to see, the dumb to speak, the paralytic and the dead to rise up and walk.

Though these particulars are as well testified by credible witnesses as they are in themselves decisive of the point in question, yet permit me, in taking leave of this part of the subject, to attempt fixing their credit and their impression by mentioning one detached fact,—which in its nature appears so precise that there is little danger of mis-stating it—so public that there can be no reasonable doubt of its authenticity—and at the same time so unambiguous as to furnish the advocates of Missions with a powerful argument. At a station near the Cape of Good Hope the Missionaries have succeeded in collecting together a large body of converts from among the Hottentots and Buschmen, whom they have settled in a thriving village, and instructed in the arts of life. Some months ago the Government required them to pay tax; and as for some urgent reason the produce of two years was called for at once, it far exceeded the immediate ability of the little colony to make up the sum. Their teachers trembled lest the effect should be their sudden dispersion and consequent relapse into idolatry. But no.—Sensible of their blessings they resolved with one mind to satisfy this unusual demand by extraordinary efforts. Accordingly they plied their several crafts for some time with redoubled assiduity, until the full amount of the tax was collected. The impulse once given, they voluntarily continued their labours until an additional sum was amassed, to be applied by the Missionary Society, in pro-

pagating the Gospel among their Heathen brethren.* Gratifying spectacle ! to see so many new disciples, recently among the most abject of men, exercising so much sound wisdom and steady principle, as under such circumstances to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and unto God the things that were God's.

With facts like these placed in great abundance before us, can it any longer be a matter of doubt that the Christian world contains resources, of ample extent, and of certain efficacy, for enlightening the nations? We have not yet exerted half our strength, yet thousands, in many instances the most hopeless of mankind, have been emancipated from the slavery of their sins. But millions remain behind.—I need not recur to the tale of their wretchedness. You have not forgotten, I trust, what has been already said of their unhappy lot. But if their errors and their crimes are yet fresh in your thoughts, compare with them, I beseech you, *our* plentiful store of means for their correction. Place before your minds, in one view, the need and the supply, weigh them deliberately together, and then say what is our duty. Does our holy faith permit us to harden our hearts against the wants and distresses of our neighbour? No surely. Its language is, “Be ye tender-hearted;” and, “Let every man look to the things of another.”

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* “About 1200 people belong to this settlement (Betheldorp). Since its commencement 400 adults have been baptized, 300 of whom have been added to the church during the last year. The Hottentots belonging to this settlement have paid taxes to the Government to the amount of nearly £800 in one year. They have contributed to the funds of this Society £120. They are now building at their own expense a school-room and a printing-office under the same roof; they make collections for the poor every Lord's Day, and send out into the neighbouring country a number of itinerants by whom the knowledge of the Gospel is happily diffused.”—See Report of the London Missionary Society.—Missionary Chronicle for June 1816.

But what is it that now calls for our sympathy? Consider well my friends. It is the salvation of countless immortals that lies at stake. Where shall the charity of the Gospel find a subject of deep concern if not here? Where a cause in which her mighty energies may worthily be exhausted? If in the slight transactions of this life the precept of love to your neighbour imposes an obligation which you fear to transgress, how is its force increased a thousand and a thousand fold, when applied to an occasion of such eternal moment as this! Millions of your brethren are yet in darkness. They are unfortunate Pilgrims, travelling towards an everlasting world, in a road beset with relentless enemies. Before your eyes they lie plundered, bleeding, perishing. Will you, with the means of deliverance in your hands, act the inconsistent, the unfeeling, the unchristian part, and after looking on their miseries pass by on the other side? Oh no! A better purpose I trust is formed in your souls. You contemplate with approbation and delight the benevolent cares of the good Samaritan. You feel that to imitate his example were to do that which is at once most just and most amiable; and while your hearts prompt you to have mercy on these wretched sufferers, you hear a voice behind exhorting you to the deed. It is the voice of one who shed his blood for them and for you. "Go, it says,—
"Go and do likewise."

Had nothing more been requisite on the present occasion, than merely to establish the conclusion, that it is a Christian duty to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, it would have been unnecessary to detain you with so large a statement of facts. But it is of consequence for us to perceive besides, with what peculiar force that duty is binding upon ourselves—the inhabitants of a country which en-

joys the faith of Jesus in its purity, and which is become, in our days, the great centre of religious activity. This discovery we shall the more easily make, by the help of so much recent history ; if we bear in mind at the same time that a duty becomes imperative, and the neglect of it inexcusable, in proportion as its OBLIGATION is CLEAR—its PERFORMANCE EASY—and its END IMPORTANT. With a few remarks on each of these topics, I hasten to the close of this discourse.

1. The obligation of instructing the Heathen was always manifest from the period of our Lord's ascension ; but it has received fresh illustration from late events and discoveries. In the last and preceding century, the excellent men of our own country, who were almost the first among protestants to make this attempt, acted no doubt under a sense of duty : Yet their views of Heathen depravity, and of the power of Christians to assail that depravity with effect, must have been far less distinct than ours. The knowledge collected on the former of these points, has been greatly enlarged and confirmed since their days, by the observations of many intelligent travellers. Some distinguished individuals, who, acting as judges and magistrates in our foreign dominions, have had the best opportunities of observing the condition of society there, bear testimony to its melancholy disorders. Above all a great body of Missionaries who have resided long in Pagan lands—mixed intimately with the people—and directed a particular attention to the state of their religion and morals, have filled up the details of that revolting picture which our predecessors viewed only in its general outlines. Again, these men could have no grounds, but speculative ones, for believing that Christians would combine extensively to second their

intentions. Such combination being even supposed, the success of their labours in preaching the Gospel, however probable from Scripture, was insured by no experience precisely applicable to existing circumstances. In primitive times, our faith had been rapidly propagated by miraculous means. In latter ages, a corrupted Christianity had gained ground, partly by lying wonders, partly by force of arms, and partly by undue compliances with inveterate superstitions. But the force of the simple truth, preached by uninspired men, without miracles, without intimidation, without concession, had never yet been tried. At the present day, however, the case is widely different. The success of the experiment is proclaimed on every side, and a mass of testimony produced, not only capable of removing the scruples of the wise, but sufficient, one would suppose, to silence the most resolute objectors. If former generations then acknowledged their debt to the Gentiles, how much more should we? The will of Christ, indeed, was always the same; but the need of regarding, and the possibility of accomplishing it, press upon our convictions with greater and progressive evidence, dissipating a whole cloud of objections, which, though very futile, were notwithstanding very plausible, and palliated the offence of an inactivity which they could not excuse.

2. The propagation of the gospel is, at all times, attended with difficulty; such as it requires the utmost strength and skill of its friends to overcome. But perhaps no age or country ever presented greater facilities to its dissemination than our own. To say nothing of our almost universal intercourse with foreign nations, which, however, affords the greatest advantages, the state of matters at home is become extremely favourable, and that very recently. Our countrymen, to whom I have just referred, as making the

first Protestant efforts in this cause, had far more formidable obstacles to surmount than we. It was their lot to call the first attention to the object. They had the first Societies to frame; the first Missionaries to procure; the first foreign settlements to establish: whereas we are only called to maintain, or at most to enlarge, the edifice which they have erected.—A far easier task. For now the public mind is familiar with the scheme. A great and encreasing number are trained up from their youth in those habits of thinking, which will fit them, as occasion may require, either to take a share in the management of the design at home, or contribute to its execution abroad. The best fields of foreign exertion, and the best methods of cultivating them are more clearly ascertained. The kind of education necessary for Missionaries is better and better understood. The means of imparting it are provided. Reinforcements of various kinds are even beginning to flow in from the churches already planted in heathen countries. In short, the whole system is in full and vigorous operation; and nothing more is necessary than to sustain, or if possible, to augment its power. The part which most of us, my brethren, are called to take in its support is the easiest imaginable. The toil and the care fall upon others: we need only give it our commendation and our prayers, and drop our mite, as God shall prosper us, into the sacred treasury. But if our trouble be small, can we refrain from observing, that our gratification may be great. Dwelling at ease, and far from the dangers of the contest, we may rejoice with a full heart in every fresh triumph of the cross. And, Oh! how much better were it to purchase a higher relish of this pleasure, even by retrenching our comforts for the purpose of enlarging our contributions, than to incur the reproach of having, with an indolent

or selfish unconcern, suffered those beneficent institutions to decay, which had been reared with infinite pains, by the hands of greater, and wiser, and holier men.

3. To impart to the Heathen the truths of salvation, as they lie unpolled in the sacred record, is surely a matter of the highest importance. Even those who have submitted their consciences to human authority, and loaded our holy faith with superstitious inventions, are inexcusable, if they neglect to disseminate the truth, as far as they are acquainted with it. But those who admit no standard of faith and morals but the Bible, and who, from this source, derive those very doctrines, and that very morality of Christ, which are destined in the end to take possession of the whole earth, seem, by this circumstance, peculiarly marked out to be the great evangelists of the world. They hold the gospel in that very form under which it has ever been found most efficacious in putting ignorance and idolatry to flight; and therefore to them is, in a great measure, committed the important power of converting the greatest possible number of mankind in the shortest period, and of conducting them to the highest attainable point of knowledge and holiness. Upon the use made of so valuable a talent, momentous consequences must ensue. Neglect it, and many generations, in many lands, may remain in total or partial ignorance, who might otherwise be thoroughly enlightened. Improve it with diligence, and the same large portion of our fellow men may be put in possession of all the present comforts, and all the eternal glories of true religion, which, but for the blessing of God upon our endeavours, might have been left to perish.

On every account, therefore, the duty which, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, and subjects of the law of love, we owe to the Heathen, is doubly binding upon us as protestant in-

habitants of Great Britain in the present age. In our hands is the untainted bread of life; and before us is an organized system of means for distributing it, of which the sufficiency has been fully and happily demonstrated. May it not be added, my brethren, that these considerations apply, with peculiar force, to you. A branch of that system exists in your own city—a Missionary Society, anxious for your countenance, subject to your inspection, and zealous to carry your benevolent purposes into effect. At this hour, your duty, though it cannot be adequately enforced, has, however, been suggested. An opportunity offers, (the last perhaps) of performing it. You are solicited—you are exhorted—you are entreated. Give, then, in the name of Christ, and when all the fleeting interests that might restrain your liberality shall have ceased for ever, expect your reward in the blissful fellowship of many whom your bounty shall have contributed to save, and in the approving smile of Him who himself condescended to purchase us from death, not with perishing things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of his only begotten and well beloved Son. Amen.

ADDRESS

OF THE PERTHSHIRE MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

TO THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC.

IN calling the attention of the Public to the subject of Missions, the Members of the *Perthshire Missionary Society* do not mean to dwell on the labours of the primitive Missionaries, or on those seasons of refreshing, when entire nations were converted by the preaching of the Apostles, or of apostolic men. They only beg leave to explain the principles on which their association is formed, and to point out facts in the modern history of the church, which clearly prove that their scheme is neither impracticable, nor hopeless.

Were this a new attempt there might be some pretence for standing aloof, till the issue should be ascertained: but the work has been going on ever since the time when the gospel was first promulgated to the world; and the success of Christian Missionaries even in modern times is sufficient to justify the most sanguine expectations, and to afford encouragement to the most strenuous exertions.

The MORAVIANS or UNITED BRETHREN, have laboured with indefatigable zeal, and eminent success, in this work of love. They have established churches in Greenland, and Labrador; regions which seemed consigned to perpetual desolation: where a barren soil, and an inclement sky repelled the most hardy adventurers, and seemed to present insuperable obstacles to the efforts of benevolence. But no difficulties could repress the zeal of the Moravian Missionaries: they submitted to all the privations, and hardships of

savage life: and, by the blessing of God, have raised thousands of their fellow creatures, from the lowest state of moral degradation, and temporal misery, to the enjoyment of Christian comfort, and the blessings of civilized society. They have under their care upwards of 27,000 converts, who conduct themselves with the utmost propriety, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.

The BAPTISTS have been extremely useful in India, particularly in educating children, and in translating the Scriptures into the languages of the country. In the course of last year, they expended £14,000 in carrying on nineteen translations of the Scriptures, printing six thousand volumes, together with nearly twenty thousand copies of the gospels, and twenty five thousand smaller books: besides supporting 53 missionaries, and educating above 1000 children of various nations.

The CHURCH of ENGLAND has seen the necessity of making similar exertions, and a Missionary Society, under the patronage of several of the Dignitaries of the church, is at present, in great activity, and is expending very considerable funds in the great work of Evangelizing the Heathen.

The EDINBURGH MISSIONARY SOCIETY, has directed its exertions chiefly to Russian Tartary; and wants nothing but funds to give efficacy to its plan of enlightening a most wretched portion of the human race. Kattagery, a young Sultan, converted by the labours of the Missionaries, and who lately attended the Persian Embassy to Petersburgh, is now in this country, anxious to be more fully instructed in the way of truth, that he may proclaim it with more effect to his blinded countrymen.

The LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY was founded in 1795; the fundamental principle of this Association, is, not to countenance any particular form of church order or government; but to preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, to the Heathen; leaving it to Christian converts to assume for themselves, such a form of government, as shall appear to them most agreeable to the word of God. This Society

has Missionaries in India, China, Ceylon, Java, Amboyna, Isle of France, South Sea Islands, and South Africa.—The Missionaries were in danger, for some time, of being driven entirely from the South Sea Islands; but their affairs have now assumed the most encouraging aspect, in that quarter: and a considerable number, including many Chiefs of the Islands, have renounced their idolatry, reformed their lives, and openly professed the faith of Christ.—In South Africa, they have been eminently successful. In a late communication from one of the settlements there, it is said, “The work of conversion goes on rapidly: we can say, that almost every day, souls are added to us.” Africanen, a ferocious plunderer, who lately desolated the country, and drove the Missionaries from their stations, has now become their protector, and has a Missionary constantly residing with him. At a late meeting of the Missionaries, from the different settlements in South Africa, six converted natives were solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry, among their brethren.

THE PERTSHIRE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

To act in union with these Societies, or separately, as circumstances might require, a Society for propagating the Gospel among Heathen and unenlightened nations, was established in Perth, in the year 1796; and though it has not attracted so much attention, as the importance of the object which it has in view, unquestionably demands, yet it still continues to exist, with a slight alteration in its name and constitution, as a foundation for more extended exertions; and from the annexed account of its proceedings, it is hoped, that its labours will appear to have been not altogether ineffectual. It has had to struggle with the indifference of some, and with the hostility of others; with ignorance, with prejudice, with selfishness: yet, though obscure, it is unextinguished, and remains, like the sacred fire in the censer of the priest, to kindle the incense of devotion before the Lord.

The founders of this Society considered it as their bounden duty, as Christians, to impart the light of truth to those who are sitting in darkness. They were satisfied that Scripture, and reason, and humanity, were all on their side; and so far from being shaken in their convictions, they would now press them, with additional confidence and earnestness, on the attention of their brethren.—They remembered the last command which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to his disciples, and the promise with which it was accompanied: “Go and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:—and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;” they remembered the zeal of the primitive disciples, and the eminent success which attended their labours: in deference, therefore, to this divine command, and in dependence on this divine promise, which they have seen realized in the history of the church; the members of the Perthshire Missionary Society, considered themselves as bound, authorized, and encouraged, to contribute their endeavours to the mighty work of evangelizing the world, and of imparting to their helpless brethren, the knowledge of salvation.

They have never been able to see any difficulty in this undertaking, which zeal, and prudence, aided by the grace of God, may not overcome: they have always been persuaded, that the chief difficulty lies in overcoming the indolence, lukewarmness, and selfishness of professing Christians, and that, were these evil qualities once removed, the obstacles arising from the Heathen themselves, would be easily surmounted.—For what difficulties are *now* to be met with, that have not always existed, and that have not uniformly been overcome, when assailed by the weapons of truth, wielded with skill, discretion, and perseverance.—What nations, in modern times, are more barbarous than were some of the nations of Europe, when the day spring from on high visited them? Yet we see them now glorying in the knowledge, civilization, and refinement which they have derived from the gospel. Why, then, should

any one despair of converting the savage Indian, when he sees the no less savage inhabitants of Britain, of Scythia, of Germany, and of Gaul, bending the neck to the yoke of Christ? Or why despair of converting the half civilized, or as others will have it, the highly refined Chinese, and Hindoos, when we see the learned, and elegant Greeks, and also the powerful and luxurious Romans, in spite of all their pride of learning, or of power; in spite of all their prejudices, and their sins, yet renouncing their errors, forsaking their idols, and humbling themselves before the cross of Christ?—In short, not a single objection founded on the difficulty of the undertaking, can be advanced, that has not a thousand times been refuted by facts: and that is not daily refuted by occurrences within the range of our own experience, and observation: for whilst some are idly disputing about the practicability of converting the Heathen, we may daily hear of the frozen Esquimaux, the barbarous Hottentot, or the effeminate Hindoo, renovated, and comforted, by the reception of the truth.

We do not deny that there are difficulties in converting the Heathen; we only deny that they are insurmountable; and maintain, that apostolic zeal, supported by Christian liberality, would find attentive hearers, and anxious enquirers after the way of salvation, among those who have never yet heard of the name of Christ.—We are not wanting all men to become Missionaries: we do not call on those who have no fitness for the undertaking, to forsake their occupations, their houses, or their lands, that they may labour exclusively in the vineyard of the Lord: they may be more usefully employed at home, in fulfilling the duties of their respective stations. But what we want of them is, that if they have not time, nor abilities, nor inclination, for the work, they would countenance those who have; or, at least, that they would throw no discouragement in their way.

Men have been found who count not their lives dear for the sake of Christ; and in whose prudence and abilities, as

well as zeal, the public may depend, notwithstanding the insinuations, or assertions of their enemies. These men are entitled to support, from the usefulness of their labours, whether we consider them in a moral, a literary, or a political point of view: they are entitled to admiration for their fortitude in encountering danger, and for their disinterested zeal for the glory of God; and if ever the world is to be enlightened, and reformed, it must be by the labours of such men as these, and not by the indolent speculations of the philosopher in his closet, who is more anxious to display his own ingenuity, than willing to incur danger or fatigue, in benefiting his fellow-men.

The timid and the distrustful shrink from such undertakings: they pretend to be afraid to interfere with the arrangements of Divine Providence, alleging that God will accomplish the work in his own good time and way. But if ever the gospel is to be made known to the ends of the earth; if ever the prophecies, which proclaim the universality of Christ's kingdom, are to be fulfilled, it must be by the instrumentality of human means.—We are not to expect a second manifestation of the Son of God, to instruct mankind; we are not to expect a second commission to be given to inspired apostles, enough has already been done in this respect, for the conversion of the world: and all that is wanting is, that we should shake off the inactivity of sloth, and be labourers together with God, in promoting the glory of his kingdom.

But unless we bestir ourselves nothing can be done. It would not be more absurd to pray for an abundant harvest, whilst we neither till the ground, nor sow the seed, than it is to pray, "Thy kingdom come," whilst we do not move a finger to promote it. We must go, or send to the Heathen: they will not come to us to seek instruction; for they do not know that they need it: and though we should disturb their prejudices; though the ill-disposed among them should say, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also," yet we must persist to instruct,

in all meekness and long suffering, those who oppose themselves; and endeavour to make them acquainted with the way of happiness and salvation, which they have not known.

We are accustomed to hear it observed, "Why do so much abroad, when so much remains to be done at home?" It is true, indeed, that much remains to be done at home, but not in providing means of grace, and opportunities of hearing the glad tidings of salvation; these are already enjoyed in an eminent degree, by the inhabitants of this favoured land; and the only exertion required of us, in this respect, is to persuade men to avail themselves of the numerous opportunities already afforded them.—But the Heathen are not only perishing for lack of knowledge, as is the case with some among ourselves, who neglect the bread of life when presented to them; but they are absolutely deprived of the means of knowledge, and languishing in the most abject ignorance, and wretchedness. All that is required among ourselves, is, to make men appreciate, and improve the religious advantages which they enjoy; and it is not easy to conceive any thing more effectual to rouse the careless to a just sense of their privileges, than to see an earnest, and active zeal to diffuse the knowledge of God, to the utmost corners of the earth.

Our countrymen have lately laboured with astonishing zeal, to give a more extended circulation to the word of God. Their labours have been crowned with remarkable success; they have given an impulse to the nations of Europe; and as the good work goes on and prospers, we may anticipate, with confidence, that the period is not far distant, when every people under heaven shall hear in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God.—The Members of the Perthshire Missionary Society, rejoice as much as any can do, in the blessed prospects which are beginning to open on a benighted world, and they recommended their institution to the attention of the Public, not in opposition to the Bible Society, but as a most necessary, and essential auxiliary; being convinced, that,

though the Heathen nations should, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, read the word of God, they never will be able to understand, and apply it, *unless some one guide them*. We are taught by an authority, which the Church of Scotland venerates next to the Sacred Scriptures, and whose decision, on this point, no church will controvert; that, “the Spirit of God maketh the reading, *but especially the preaching* of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.” It was by preaching that the gospel was first diffused among the Heathen nations; it is by preaching that it is still maintained in countries professing Christianity; and notwithstanding the knowledge and information contained in the word of God, even those who have it in their hands, would soon become ignorant of its doctrines were they not enforced by the exhortations of the preacher.—How then, are we to suppose, that the unenlightened Heathen are to avail themselves of the advantages presented by the word of God, without the aid of an authorized instructor, whose piety they can respect, and in whose knowledge they can confide? Put the Scriptures into the hands of such a teacher: let him carry them as his credentials among the Heathen; and they will listen to him as to a messenger sent from heaven, and perceiving that the word of God is the foundation of his doctrines, and instructions, they will eagerly seek to draw the water of life from this well of salvation.

It is the duty of the Christian world, to impart the light of truth to those who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Those who cannot engage in the work, are at least bound to wish it well: and since so much remains to be done, they ought earnestly to pray, that God may send labourers into the vineyard, and bless their labours with abundant success.

Three-fourths of the human race are still sitting in darkness; not only ignorant of God, but sunk to the lowest state of temporal wretchedness. Shall we make no attempt for their deliverance? Shall the British nation, foremost

in every enterprise which can lead to gain, or temporal glory, and proud of its monuments of philanthropy and benevolence, view, unconcerned, the temporal and spiritual misery of so many millions of human beings? We owe the Heathen much: we have derived from them much wealth, many comforts, and many luxuries, whilst almost all that we have given them in return, is a relish for our vices and the knowledge of our crimes. A happier era seems to dawn on the world: and Christians of almost all denominations, now begin to see it to be their duty to diffuse the knowledge of salvation.—The Perthshire Missionary Society implore of their Christian Brethren, their countenance, their prayers, their pecuniary assistance, in proportion as God has prospered them.—They trust that the duty of promoting the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, has been made obvious to every understanding; they trust that the conscience of every one who reads, or hears, will confess that this is the work of God: they do not prescribe to any one what he should give: but they adopt the words of the apostle, on a similar occasion; “Every man, as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver;” and “he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.”

PERTH, 1st August, 1816.

REGULATIONS

Of the Perthshire Missionary Society.

I. The designation of the Society shall be, THE PERTH-SHIRE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

II. The sole object of this Society shall be, the propagation of Christianity among Heathen and unenlightened nations. But on account of the state of Ireland, and the immediate relation in which it stands to Britain, should any person desire their contributions to be applied for propagating the gospel among their fellow-subjects in Ireland, this Society will readily take charge of transmitting, agreeably to the directions of the donors, whatever sums may be entrusted to their care.

III. The Society shall endeavour not only to obtain personal Subscriptions and Congregational Collections, but also to form Auxiliary Societies : and as information powerfully tends to excite exertion, it shall also endeavour to collect and circulate information, respecting Missionary objects, as extensively as possible.

IV. Every person subscribing not less than five shillings annually, or five guineas at one time, a Minister whose Congregation makes a Collection to the same amount, an Executor paying a bequest of £10, and the Preses and Secretary of every Auxiliary Society, shall be Members of this Society.

V. The Office-bearers of this Society shall be a President, Vice-Presidents, two Secretaries, and a Treasurer.

VI. The business of the Society shall be conducted by

a Committee, consisting of the Office-bearers, twelve Lay-Directors, and all the Ministers who are Members of this Society: any three of these shall be a quorum. The Committee, shall meet four times a year, on the Tuesdays following the first Sabbaths of Jan., April, July, and Nov., and shall report its proceedings to the Society.

VII. The Society shall meet once a-year, when the Report of the Committee shall be received, the Office-bearers chosen for the ensuing year, the Treasurer's accounts audited, and any proposed alterations on the preceding Regulations, taken into consideration.

DISBURSEMENTS, &c.

	<i>Moravians.</i>	<i>Lon. Mission,</i>	<i>Edin. Mission.</i>
1797. March 29,	£50		
June 30,		£200	
1799. April 9,	50		
Sept. 18,		80	
1802. Jan. 12,	30		
July 14,		90	
1803. April 12,			£20
Oct. 11,	50		20
1804. July 10,	25	50	25
1805. Oct. 9,	24	40	24
1806. Oct. 15,	24	30	30
1807. Oct. 14,	20	30	20
1808. Oct. 25,	20	20	20
1809. Oct. 10,		50	20
1810. do. 16,	25	50	—
1811. do. 15,	25	40	£179
1812. do. 14,	25	45	
1813. do. 12,	40	50	
1814. Nov. 16,	40	50	
1815. Oct. 10,	30	50	
	£478	£875	
		478	
		179	
		£1532	

MISSIONARIES EDUCATED BY THE SOCIETY.

Besides making the above-mentioned disbursements, the Perth Missionary Society assisted, at considerable expense, in educating four Missionaries, who are actively employed, in different parts of the world, in extending the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom, the speedy establishment of which among all nations on the earth, is a thing devoutly to be wished by Christians of every denomination.

JOHN M'DONALD, the first of the young men, to whose education the Society contributed, is a native of Auchtergaven. Though a combination of events, which it would be needless to detail, prevented him from prosecuting, as was intended, a Foreign Mission, the Society have the satisfaction to state, that he is usefully employed in preaching the Gospel, to a respectable congregation in the vicinity of Newcastle-under-Line. WILLIAM CORNER, a negro, from Demerara, was the second person whom the Society trained for Missionary labours. The rudiments of his education he learned in the Parochial School of For-gandenny. In acquiring a knowledge of the truth, he was chiefly assisted by the Rev. Mr WILLISON, Minister of that Parish; and after making, under his superintendence, a degree of proficiency, which encouraged the hope that his services as a Missionary, might be useful among the Heathen, he was recommended to the London Missionary Society, who, having instructed him in the way of God more perfectly, sent him to South Africa, and at Bethelsdorp, he is now employed, in a variety of ways, in promoting the benevolent ends of his mission. The next person educated by the Society was JOHN TAYLOR. He was a parishioner of Scone, and member of the Rev. Mr JAMIESON's congregation, by whose direction his education was principally conducted, until the Society sent him to Gosport, where he was placed under the care of the Rev. Mr BOGUE, who superintended his studies, for eighteen months, when

he was found qualified for entering on the good work, with which his soul was completely engrossed, and sent to South Africa the place of his destination. JOHN BURNET, the last, and not the least promising of the young men educated and patronized by the Society is a native of Perth. Previous to their taking him under their care, he was a respectable teacher of a Sabbath Evening School in this city. He had acquired, by his own industry, a tolerable acquaintance with the Hebrew tongue, and in the course of five months, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr ESDAILE, he made very considerable proficiency in the Greek. In the space of four months more, the same gentleman gratuitously taught him as much of Latin, as to enable him to prosecute, without the assistance of any other teacher, the study of that useful language. After his talent for preaching was repeatedly tried, and sufficiently ascertained, he was sent to Dublin, and afterwards to Cork, where he was ordained minister of a congregation in that city, and continues to discharge the duties of the pastoral office with much acceptance and success. This short account of the proceedings of the Society, relating to the education of Missionaries, and also of the way in which those Missionaries are at present employed, will, it is hoped, be acceptable, not only to those who take a special interest in the success of the Missionary Society, established in this city, but to all who wish well to every institution, which has for its infinitely important object, the dissemination of the truth as it is in Jesus.

OFFICE-BEARERS.

ALEXANDER MURRAY, Esq. of Ayton, *President*.

Rev. James Scott, Perth,	}	<i>Vice-Presidents.</i>
John Richardson, Esq. of Pitfour,		
Robert Ross, Esq. Provost of Perth,		

Rev. John Willison,	}	<i>Secretaries.</i>
Rev. John Findlay,		

Dr M'Omie, *Treasurer*.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT.

Messrs D. M'Laren, John Bower, John Blair, Thomas Duncan, Joseph Jamieson, Thomas Robertson, John Lyal, George Condie, Patrick Richardson, Thomas Dotte, John Stalker, John Ramsay. And all Ministers who are Members of the Society.

